

Remembering Maria

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Summary: Red vs Blue: After a painful nightmare, Sarge reflects on the past and those he has left behind. Or is it the other way around?

Remembering Maria

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By Thalia

Beta-ed by Ptath

Disclaimer: We do not own Halo or Red vs. Blue. Even if we could, simple self-preservation would dictate we stay far, far away.

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"_This" is for flashbacks._

'This' is for thought.

* * *

>Sarge woke with a start. He reached over with shaky hands turning on the small bedside lamp while images from his dreams still lingered in his mind.<p><p>

It had seemed so real. It had seemed like his wife and son were really still alive, and he was with them at their home and they were happy. He awoke when his brain screamed at him that it couldn't be real, and what had been a wonderful dream had transformed into a horrendously cruel nightmare as he watched his family slip away from him into darkness.

Shaking his head sharply to rid it of the unwanted reminder that his family was gone, Sarge got up out of his bed and crossed over to his desk on the other side of his room. As he moved to sit in the rickety

old desk chair, he reached down and opened the bottom drawer removing a manila folder that contained a stack of old complaint and request forms that had been submitted by Simmons and Donut.

Reginald opened the folder gently and gazed fondly at the calligraphy written words. He smiled as he remembered the first time he had told Simmons that if he had a complaint he had to submit it in hand-written triplicate. He had been surprised as hell when he actually got it and in calligraphy no less. Apparently, it had been the only pen Simmons could find at the time consequently setting a precedent, although it really was very sloppy compared to Maria's.

A sad sigh escaped his lips as he reached to retrieve his wife's picture from its secret hiding place. He had kept it in a frame on his night stand, but when Donut had spotted the frame he had started babbling about decorating the room around it, and his unfulfilled dreams of being an interior decorator. It was at that point that the Red leader had extracted the precious photo and proceeded to destroy the frame that, with out the treasure it had held, was worthless.

A quite light filled his eyes as the old photo brought back memories of happier times. It had been so long, so terribly, heart-wrenchingly long since he had last seen her, had heard her laugh; yet, the memories were so vivid, so painfully vivid. Maria had been so beautiful, so happy, so full of life, and so artistic.

Oh, how she loved going to the opera and the ballet, and oh how he hated it. But he always went without complaint just to see that smile. She was always so exuberant after a performance. She always said she felt like she could walk on air after one of those wretchedly boring monotonous performances, but it was always worth it. He had even bought her ballet tickets one year for her birthday. That had definitely had its advantages.

Sarge glanced back down at the desktop and suddenly remembered what had sent him on this trip down memory lane. Yes, Maria had always loved the performing arts, but, while she had always been incredibly modest about it, she had possessed quite a knack for painting and the like. If it required manual dexterity, then you could pretty much bet on her to be damn good at it. She painted some of the most beautiful and exotic landscapes he had ever seen. And while he loved the smile he saw after a performance, it was when she was working that he loved watching her best.

He loved that focused look she got when she painted. She always had paint smudges on her face and hands, and she would furrow up her brow in deep concentration, but every time he had been able to tear his gaze away from her beautiful figure and watched the movements of her brush on the canvas, he was amazed. If he had only ever watched her hand, he would have never imagined her face was one of such intense concentration because the brush strokes so swift, effortless, and smooth. But what he had loved most of all about watching Maria was when she realized he was watching. It happened the same way every time, without fail:

Maria looked up and saw her husband standing in the doorway of her studio staring at her. "Reginald, what's that look for?" she asked sweetly.

He looked into her eyes and gave her one of his rare true smiles

before replying, "Because I love you."—

They had replayed that single scene hundreds and hundreds of times, but the love that filled the words never diminished, and it never got old.

And then there was the calligraphy. He remembered when she had first seen the advertisement for lessons while they were in town one day:

"_Reggie, doesn't this look fun. I wish I could take lessons."—

So, when they had returned home, he had taken a look and figured that with a little sacrifice on his part, he could work so she take lessons even on their, at the time, limited income. He had surprised her the next morning by taking her to her first lesson. When he picked her up an hour later, she was beaming. Her teacher had told her she had talent. He hadn't expected anything less from his Maria. She had tried to teach him once, but they had both quickly decided that he was a lost cause. Despite his hopelessness concerning his participation in the art, Maria had realized that her husband really quite liked it, and from then on every card, every letter, every quick note - all were written in her elegant, precise calligraphy.

Reginald looked back at the documents spread across his desk once more allowing his eyes to drink in the intricate lettering and multiple colors of ink. He ran his fingers across the hand written pages as though he could feel the words, the letters; as though being able to touch the letters was like being able to touch her.

Silent tears came streaking down his face. Oh, how he longed to touch her just once more. What he wouldn't give to be able to stroke her hair, kiss her soft lips, or hold those skillful hands one more time. But he couldn't. He would never be able to again because of the disease that had relentlessly ravaged her body until nothing was left. The bitter memories of her death came flooding back. The cancer had hit Maria so suddenly; it had been so unexpected. The doctors had given her three months, and eighteen slow, painful months later she had finally lost a very long and arduous battle. She had been so strong through it all. When they had gotten that first report, she had reacted like a bulldog, sinking her teeth into the flesh of life and refusing to let go until the bitter end. Sometimes he wondered if maybe it would have been better, easier, if it would have happened faster like the doctors said it should have.

The sudden clang of pots and pans from the base kitchen pulled Sarge from his poignant remembrances.

'Ah, Dirtbag is in the kitchen. Perfect. Who better to get him out this shitty mood he'd worked himself into? It's strange though,' he thought as he carefully replaced Maria's photo in its hiding place, 'for all Grif's laziness, he's always the first one up.' The Red leader quickly dismissed the thought before taking one last look at the calligraphy covered forms and replacing the file folder in its place in the bottom drawer. Finally, he rose and made his way towards the kitchen in order to brighten his already darkened day which had only just begun.

End
file.